

Rebellion of 1837, the War of 1812, the Constitutional Act, American War, Conquest of Canada, etc., keeping constantly before the class a distinct outline, a skeleton clothed in living flesh, a vividly interesting conception of the growth of a great colony from early infancy. And what more interesting than the tales of early explorers, the troublous times of Frontenac, the travels of Champlain, of Marquette of Joliet, of La Salle, the vicissitudes of the Jesuit Fathers, and the tales of the triumphs, trials, and reverses of our own heroes of 1812-14.

In the teaching of this subject we have the means of inculcating and fostering the most whole-souled manliness, the noblest virtues, the loftiest heroism, and the truest patriotism, the young roots and branches of which, early springing to life, are easily crushed beyond all hope of revival, but as equally capable of the highest development.

## ✻ English ✻

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### SOME RECENT ARTICLES ON CHAUCER.

STUDENTS of Chaucer have had in literary journals, during the present year, many interesting articles on Chaucer, some of them throwing fresh light upon passages of doubtful meaning, one having the unique interest of disclosing to the world a poem from the "Father of English Song," which for centuries has lain unknown.

Prof. Browne, of Johns Hopkins, contributes in the May, 1891, number of *Modern Language Notes*, some interesting suggestions and criticisms. He makes decided objection to Prof. Skeats' printing of ll. 12-14 of the Prologue:

"Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages  
(And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)  
To ferne halmes."

This use of parentheses would force the construing of "to goon on pilgrimages to ferne halmes" split up by l. 13,—an awkward and un-Chaucerian structure. In the number for November, attention is called to the fact that Prof. Zupitza, of Berlin, long ago suggested Prof. Skeats' reading, because of the difficulty (to him) of construing "seken straunge strondes, to ferne halmes." Prof. Browne shows that in older English "seken" took either a direct or an indirect (with "to") object indifferently. He holds, therefore, that the palmers seek strange strands and distant shrines. With regard to line 320 of the Prologue:

"His purchasynge myghte nat been infect,"

he holds that "purchasing" does not mean "conveyancing," but "gain," "acquisition." The Sergeant amassed wealth rapidly, but cautiously and adroitly kept "o' the windy side of the law."

A "mormal" he holds in l. 386,

"That on his shyne a mormal hadde he,"

is not a "cancer" or "gangrene," but an aggravated type of eczema, *morte male* described by Vigonius.

He adds to Prof. Skeats' gloss. for l. 417,

"Well koude he fortunen the ascendent,"

the remark that the ascendent was fortunate when containing a fortunate sign—such as Aries or Leo—or a fortunate planet—such as Jupiter or Venus—fortunate in sense of favorable for the treatment of disease.

Prof. John W. Hales, in the *Athenæum* (Jan. 10, 1891), contributes a long discussion of l. 120 of the Prologue:

"Hir gretteste ooth was but by seynt Loy."

Prof. Skeat has made it certain that the reference in St. Loy is to St. Eloy (St. Eligius), patron saint

of goldsmiths, and hinted that the Prioress swore by St. Loy because ("she seems to have been a little given to a love of gold and corals.") Prof. Hales ventures an explanation quite different. King Dagobert, when appointing Eligius to a certain position, desired him to take an oath on the relics of the saints. Eligius refused, fearing the judgment of heaven. The king insisted; Eligius, hard-pressed, burst into tears. Whereupon the king gave way, assuring him that he should feel more confidence in him than if had sworn all sorts of oaths. St. Eloy seems, therefore, to have contented himself with a milder vocabulary than his contemporaries; he forswore swearing, so to speak. "An oath by St. Loy" would mean then "an oath in the name of St. Loy," such as he might have uttered or approved, *i.e.*, no oath at all.

In the *Athenæum* for Oct. 24, 1891, Prof. Skeat announced his discovery of true source of Chaucer's *Boethius*. Of course it comes originally from the treatise, "De Consolatione Philosophiæ," but Chaucer's version has incorporated in it so many explanations and glosses not in the original that years ago Prof. ten Brinc suggested that Chaucer translated his version from an intermediate copy containing Latin glosses. This intermediate Prof. Skeat has had the good fortune to find in one of the MSS. of the Cambridge Library—not, indeed, the actual MS. used by Chaucer but an authentic copy, with additional explanations and glosses and a translation of all into Chaucer's English.

Most interesting of all is Prof. Skeats' publication (*Ath. Ap.* 4, 1891) of an unknown poem by Chaucer found upon a MS. of Chaucer's "Troilus" copied by Tregentil a scribe of the fifteenth century. "As it is a happy specimen of the poet at his best in a playful humor," says the Professor, "I here produce this elegant trifle." He inscribes it "To Rosemounde."

#### TO ROSEMOUNDE.

Madame, ye ben of al beaute<sup>1</sup> shryne,  
As far as cerclid is the mappemounde<sup>2</sup>;  
For as the cristal<sup>3</sup> glorios ye shyne  
And lyke<sup>4</sup> ruby ben your chekes rounde;  
Therwith ye ben so mery and so jocounde,  
That at a revel whan that I see you daunce,  
It is an oynement<sup>5</sup> unto my wounde,  
Thogh ye to me ne do no<sup>4</sup> dalliaunce.

For thogh I wepe of teres ful a tyne<sup>6</sup>  
Yet may that wo myn herte nat confounde;  
Your semly voys that ye so small out-twyne<sup>6</sup>  
Maketh my thought in love and bliss habounde.<sup>7</sup>  
So curtaysly<sup>8</sup> I go with love bounde,  
That to myself I sey<sup>9</sup>, in my penaunce,  
Suffyseth<sup>10</sup> me to love you, Rosemounde,  
Thogh ye to me ne do no daliaunce.

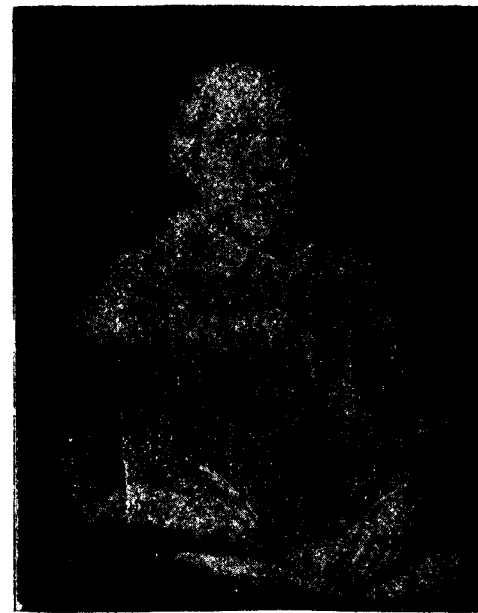
Nas never pyk walwed in galauntyne<sup>11</sup>  
As I in love am walwed and y-wounde<sup>12</sup>;  
For which full ofte I of my-self dowyne  
Thot I am trewe Tristram the secounde.<sup>13</sup>  
My love may not refrayd<sup>14</sup> be nor afounde<sup>15</sup>;  
I brenne<sup>16</sup> ay in an amorous plesaunce.  
Do what you list, I will your thral<sup>17</sup> be founde,  
Thogh ye to me ne do no daliaunce.

[<sup>1</sup>Sound the final *e*. <sup>2</sup>Fr. *mappemonde*, map of the world. <sup>3</sup>ointment. <sup>4</sup>*ne* and *no*, a double negative, meaning a simple negative "no." <sup>5</sup>A small open tub. Note the humorous exaggeration. <sup>6</sup>Your seemingly voice that you give forth so soft and clear (small). <sup>7</sup>abound. <sup>8</sup>courteously. <sup>9</sup>say. <sup>10</sup>it suffices. <sup>11</sup>There was not (see <sup>4</sup>). <sup>12</sup>There was never a pike (fish) wallowing so in galantine-sauce, as I am involved and wound up in love. <sup>13</sup>a second true Tristram (a famous legendary lover. Cf. Tennyson.) <sup>14</sup>cooled down. <sup>15</sup>explored (?). put off (?). <sup>16</sup>burn. <sup>17</sup>slave.]

It is a truth that the main source of eloquence and power is to be found in the *thoughts* and *sentiments* expressed. Apart from striking thoughts and noble sentiments there can be no true eloquence. By means of these the roughest style may be made powerful and thrilling. In all speaking and writing, the first, the paramount, the indispensable prerequisite, is to have something to say worth saying. We do not hold that a pupil should make no attempt at writing until he has first learned to think. That would be equivalent to saying that he should not enter the water until he has learned to swim. Every boy and girl has thoughts and feelings which are more or less worthy of expression, and in the act and effort of expression is usually found the very best means of quickening and enlarging the thinking power.

## MERCY.

BY SHAKESPEARE.



THE BUST OF SHAKESPEARE AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

### I.—INTRODUCTORY.

PUPILS should not be introduced to this selection until they are thoroughly familiar with the First and Second Readings of *The Merchant of Venice* (Lessons cii. and civ.) They should understand thoroughly the part it occupies in the development of the plot; for, beautiful as it is in itself, it cannot be fully enjoyed except in connection with its context. Fourth class pupils cannot do much for themselves in the preparation of this selection. The words are so difficult and unusual, and the thought is sometimes so subtle that the teacher must necessarily give a great deal of explanation. When the meaning of all the difficult words and phrases has been explained, a series of questions, such as those given below, should convey a clear idea of the meaning and the bearing of the various parts of the selection, and ought to beget a deep love for a piece of literature which embodies sentiments so sublime. The lesson should be frequently reviewed; and he will be a dull teacher, and they will be dull pupils, who cannot find in it new beauties every time it is studied anew. It should, of course, be committed to memory after the first reading.

This selection is part of the speech addressed by Portia to Shylock on the "noble quality of mercy." (See Reader, page 322.) On learning that Antonio confesses the bond, Portia, seeing the apparent hopelessness of saving his life if Shylock persists in his demand for justice, exclaims, "Then must the Jew be merciful." Shylock, purposely misunderstanding her, retorts, "On what compulsion must I? Tell me that." To this impudent and heartless question, Portia answers in the beautiful sentiments of this selection.

### II. EXPLANATORY.

Line 1. *Quality*.—Attribute, or moral characteristic.

*Of*.—This word does not here denote possession, but apposition, as in the words, "The city of Toronto."

*Strained*.—Used for the word "constrained," meaning "forced," "compulsory." The meaning of the line is as follows: "That moral characteristic which is known as mercy, acts freely, not from constraint."

l. 3. *It is twice blessed*.—It confers a two-fold blessing; conferring a blessing on the giver as well as on the receiver.

l. 5. *'Tis mightiest in the mightiest*.—Mercy is most mighty in the mightiest person, *i.e.*, the more power a person has to inflict pain, the more he bows and subdues his heart by showing mercy.

*Becomes*.—Is becoming to, adorns.

l. 6. *Throned*.—The poet evidently has in his mind the picture of a king sitting upon his throne, dispensing justice, forgiving some and condemning others. That power within him, by virtue of which